

Message Text

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ACTION OFA-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SCS-03 L-03 EB-07 SCA-01

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R 101642Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8998

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

AMEMBASSY LIMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 1171

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS PLOS EC

SUBJECT: LICENSED FOREIGN FLAG FISHING BOATS AND PROCEDURES TO BUY
LICENSES BY RADIO ARE CRITICIZED

REF: 75 QUITO 8080, 75 QUITO 8116

1. RENEWED PUBLIC CRITICISM BEGAN TO BE LEVIED IN THE LAST WEEK AT FOREIGN VESSELS FISHING WITH LICENSES IN ECUADOR'S 200 MILE CLAIMED TERRITORIAL WATERS AND THE RECENT CHANGE IN GOE POLICY AND PROCEDURES WHICH PERMITS FOREIGN FLAG VESSELS TO PURCHASE LICENSES BY RADIO CAME UNDER ATTACK AS WELL.

2. THE CRITICISM BEGAN WITH ARTICLES APPEARING IN THE PRESS IN MANABI PROVINCE CLAIMING THAT MORE THAN 150 LARGE TONNAGE FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS WERE FISHING IN ECUADOREAN WATERS AND DEPLETING THE STOCK. THE ARTICLES, WHICH ORIGINATED WITH THE FISHING PRODUCTS COOPERATIVE (CARPEN), WENT ON TO CRITICIZE THE GRANTING OF LICENSES BY RADIO, ACCUSED FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS OF "UNFAIR COMPETITION", AND SAID THESE VESSELS WERE LEGALLY TAKING ALL THE TUNA FROM "OUR" WATERS. CONGEN GUAYAQUIL REPORTS THAT THE ARTICLES ORIGINATED PK MANTA WITH TWO LOCAL POLITICIANS WHO WORK FOR THE INTERESTS OF CARPEN. ACCORDING TO A CONGEN SOURCE, CARPEN MEMBERS ARE NOT IN
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FACT EXERCISED ABOUT FOREIGN FLAG FISHING.

3. BOTH GUAYAQUIL'S "EL UNIVERSO" AND QUITO'S "EL COMERCIO" PUBLISHED ARTICLES BASED ON THE CARPEN ARTICLES IN THEIR EDITIONS OF FEBRUARY 6. ON FEBRUARY 8, QUITO'S "EL TIEMPO" PUBLISHED A COLUMN IN A SIMILAR VEIN. IT COMPLAINED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD FOUND THAT IT WAS MORE COMFORTABLE, LESS RISKY AND ECONOMICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO FISH WITH A LICENSE. "OUR COUNTRY, IN ITS TURN, HAS ACCEPTED THE FORMULA AND BY MEANS OF THE CORRESPONDING ORGANISM HAS DEDICATED ITSELF TO ISSUING PERMITS WITH PRODIGIOUSNESS AND DILIGENCE WORTHY OF A MORE ELEVATED CAUSE." AS A RESULT, THE COLUMNIST CONTINUED, "OUR TERRITORIAL SEA HAS BECOME POPULATED WITH UNITED STATES FISHING BOATS, LEGALLY PROTECTED, FOR THE CARRYING OUT OF FISHING." THE COLUMNIST CONTINUED BY SUPPORTING THE CAUSE OF THE MANTA FISHERMEN, CRITICIZING THE EXPEDITIOUS WAY IN WHICH PERMITS WERE HANDLED NOW FOR FOREIGN VESSELS, AND SPECIFICALLY OBJECTING TO AND DEMANDING THE REPEAL OF THE REGULATIONS WHICH PERMIT THE PURCHASE OF LICENSES BY RADIO WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE COLUMNIST, WORKED TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF ECUADOR BECAUSE THE FISHING BOATS ONLY BOUGHT LICENSES WHEN THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE ABOUT TO CAPTURE FISH.

4. ON FEBRUARY 9 "EL UNIVERSO" CARRIED A FURTHER NEWS REPORT STATING THAT THE FEDERATION OF POLYTECHNICAL STUDENTS OF THE COAST HAD DEMANDED SUPPRESSION OF FISHING LICENSES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL FISHING FLEET. IT ALSO REPORTED THAT THE GUAYAQUIL BRANCH OF THE ECUADOREAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FEDERATION, A COMMUNIST-ORIENTED ORGANIZATION, HAD DENOUNCED THE FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS WHICH WERE FISHING IN "TERRITORIAL WATERS" AND ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO ORDER PATROL OF THE 200 MILES TO AVOID THE CONTINUED "PILLAGE".

5. AS REPORTED REFTELS, THE QUESTION OF FOREIGN FLAG FISHING LAST SURFACED PUBLICLY IN NOVEMBER, 1975. ON THAT OCCASION THE GOVERNMENT QUASHED REPORTS OF ILLEGAL FOREIGN FLAG FISHING BY STATING THAT ALL BOATS CURRENTLY FISHING IN ECUADOREAN CLAIMED WATERS HAD MATRICULAS AND CONFIDENTIAL

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LICENSES. THE FOLLOWING MONTH, HOWEVER, "EL UNIVERSO" ON DECEMBER 10 PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE BY ALFREDO PINOARGOTE ENTITLED "THE LION'S SHARE", WHICH BITTERLY CRITICIZED FOREIGN FLAG LICENSING, AND SAID THAT THE ECUADOREAN GOVERNMENT MADE MORE MONEY FROM FINES DURING TUNA WARS THAN IT DID WHEN AMERICAN BOATS WERE PROPERLY LICENSED. FURTHER, PINOARGOTE SAID THAT THE OUTBREAK OF TUNA WARS COINCIDED WITH "GOVERNMENTS WHICH WERE NOT TO THE LIKING

OF THE POWERFUL TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES" AND THAT PERIODS OF PEACE COINCIDED WITH GOVERNMENTS TO THE LIKING OF TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS. HE CONCLUDED THAT "FOLLOWING THE FOREIGN OFFENSIVE EARLY THIS YEAR AND THE DOMESTIC OFFENSIVE DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS, IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE TO SUBDUE THE DICTATORSHIP OF RODRIGUEZ LARA, WHO WISHES TO REMAIN IN POWER AT THE SERVICE OF THE ECUADOREAN PEOPLE." THE OFFENDING COLUMNIST WAS CALLED TO QUITO FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES, AFTER WHICH HE TOOK A SOMEWHAT MORE CONCILIATORY TONE.

6. COMMENT: THIS RENEWED PUBLIC CRITICISM OF FOREIGN FLAG LICENSED REPEAT LICENSED FISHING AND THE ATTACK ON THE PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING FISHING LICENSES BY RADIO MAY REPRESENT LITTLE MORE THAN AN ELABORATION AND EXTENSION OF THE USUAL COMPLAINTS OF MANTA AND MANABI FISHERMEN THAT THEY ARE SUBJECT TO UNFAIR COMPETITION. IT MAY, ON THE OTHER HAND, REPRESENT THE BEGINNING OF A POLITICAL ATTACK ON CURRENT FISHING POLICY AND ON THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW AND REPORT THIZD DEVELOPMENT.
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